

Spectrum



Photos by Larry Edmond



Families experience Augusta Cares party

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Two year-old Taylor Plutter couldn't get enough of the blue cotton candy.

Each time her mother, Louise Plutter, would hand the toddler a small puff of the sugary treat, Taylor would quickly place it in her mouth, and immediately hold out her hand for more.

The Plutter family was one of many military Families attending Saturday's Operation Augusta Cares at the Family Y on Wheeler Road.

"I think it's outstanding. It's great the community can come together," said Plutter, who attended many of the committee meetings during the past year getting the event together.

Many community volunteers worked to gather donations to provide a free event for military Families in the area, according to Jack Kenney, an Army retiree who headed the outreach.

As a member of Aldersgate United Methodist Church, Kenney has been a part of many Soldier support events.

"We've done cookies at Christmas and cookouts at the VA in the active duty area," he said. "We support the Christian coffee house (at Fort Gordon). We've done a lot of different things, but they are mostly for the active duty Soldier. We decided we needed to do something for the Families."

Other churches including The Quest and St. Mark United Methodist Church joined in, and as the planning progressed so did many other businesses, organizations and individuals.

The pool and spray ground area at the Y was open just for military Families, and a field next to the pool was filled with activities including moon walks and other inflatable jumping toys for children. There were games, door prizes and free food.

Magician Mike Gilliland made balloon

sculptures and held a magic show.

The Bish Family used the event as a time of Family bonding prior to Sgt. Joe Bish's impending deployment with the 63rd Signal Battalion.

"She's having a blast," said Sheri Bish about the couple's daughter, Piper, 3.

Piper spent a lot of the morning in the pool.

"We haven't made it to the bouncy things yet," said Bish.

Not only was the event opened to Families of active duty personnel, but members of Families with National Guard and Reserves units that are deployed were invited as well, said Kenney.



Barreling down the water slide, (right) Tenia Sanders, giggles in anticipation of hitting the water. (Below) Jennah Enriquez, 12, makes bubbles fly in the warm breeze, while Aine Smith, 7, reloads her bubble wand. There was food, music, games, rides, booths and a number of free activities for families at the Augusta Cares event Saturday.

(Above) Many colorful rides and play areas were set aside at the Augusta Family Y, Saturday for service member Families to enjoy a fun-filled outing. (Above left) Children splash in the shower/wading pool during the event sponsored by several local organizations to show support for the Families of service members who are deployed or who will be deploying shortly.



(Above) Sgt. Todd Smith, C Company 63rd Signal Battalion and his 1-year-old son Lando Smith, splash through the water during the Augusta Cares event Saturday at the Augusta Family Y. (Left) Jake Cochran takes one for the home team and keeps smiling after his girlfriend volunteered him for the booth. Girlfriend Christina Larisey smiles as she showers him with a cream pie.

See more snapshots from this great Augusta Cares Family day on page 12.